

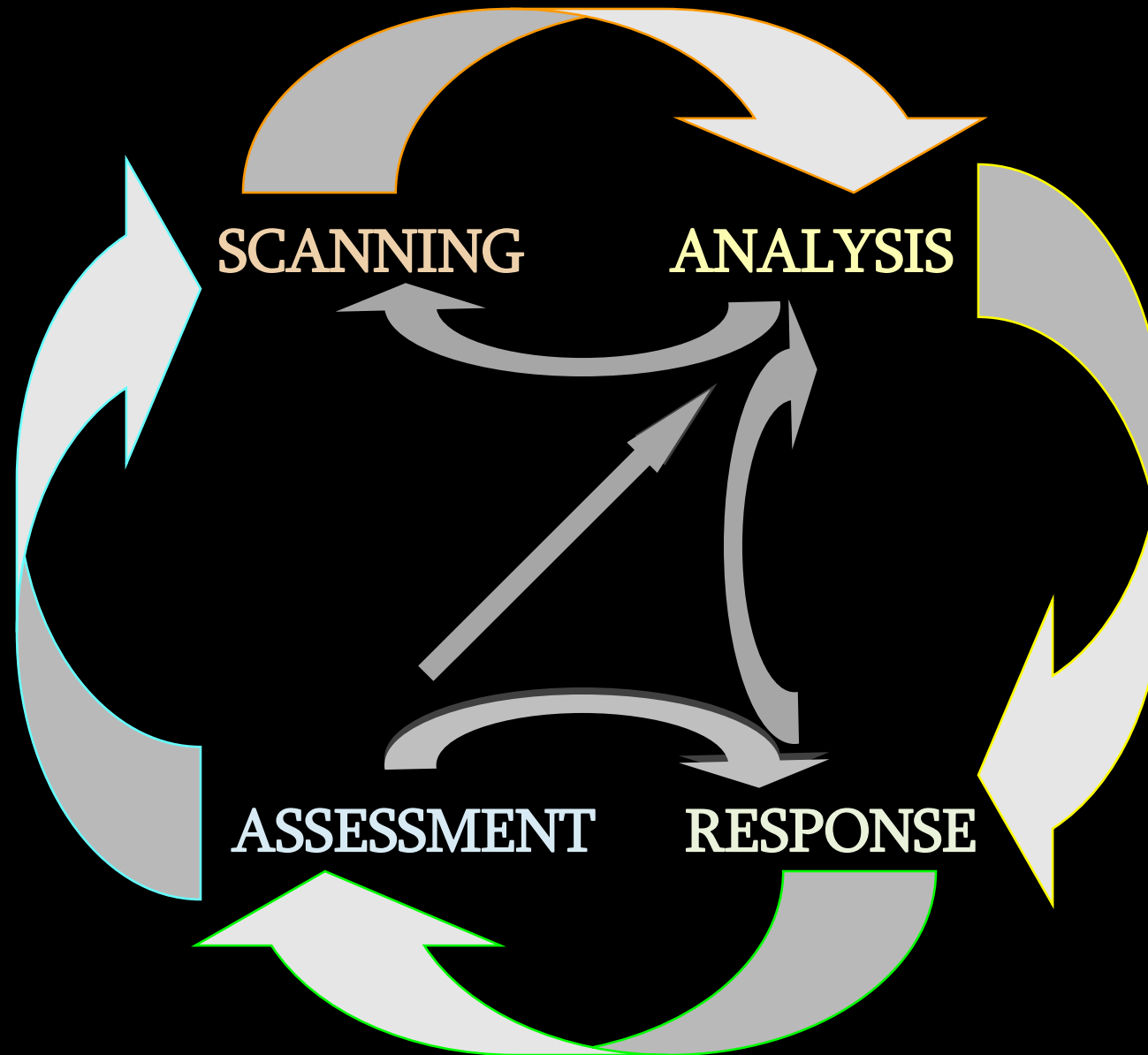
SOLVING PROBLEMS

A quick tour of how to think about problem-solving
so you are more likely to be successful

John E. Eck, University of Cincinnati, School of Criminal Justice

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The SARA Problem-Solving Process



SCAN: Find a problem and define it with some precision. Describe what you will measure to know you have been successful.

ANALYZE: Examine the problem to determine who is involved and why, what needs to be done by whom.

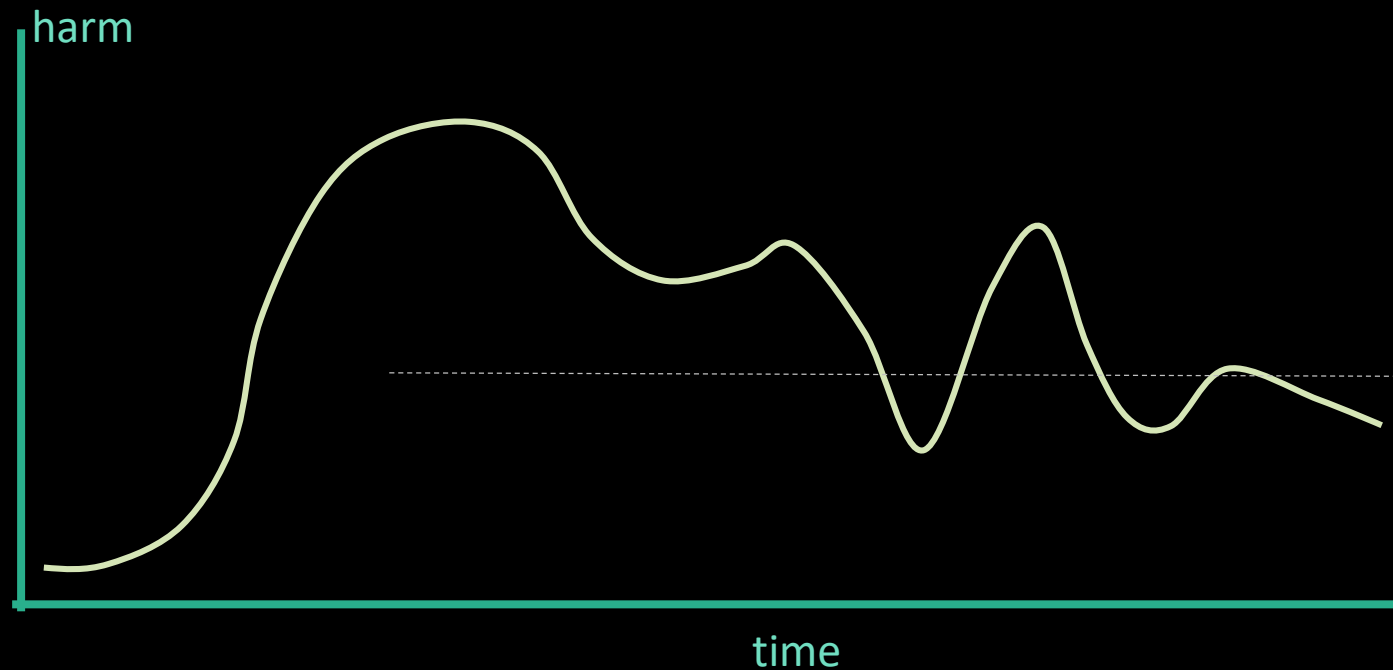
RESPOND: Craft a possible solution and put it into practice.

ASSESS: Monitor your solution to measure progress to success and tweak solution when necessary.

Metrics of Success – ruthless attention to progress

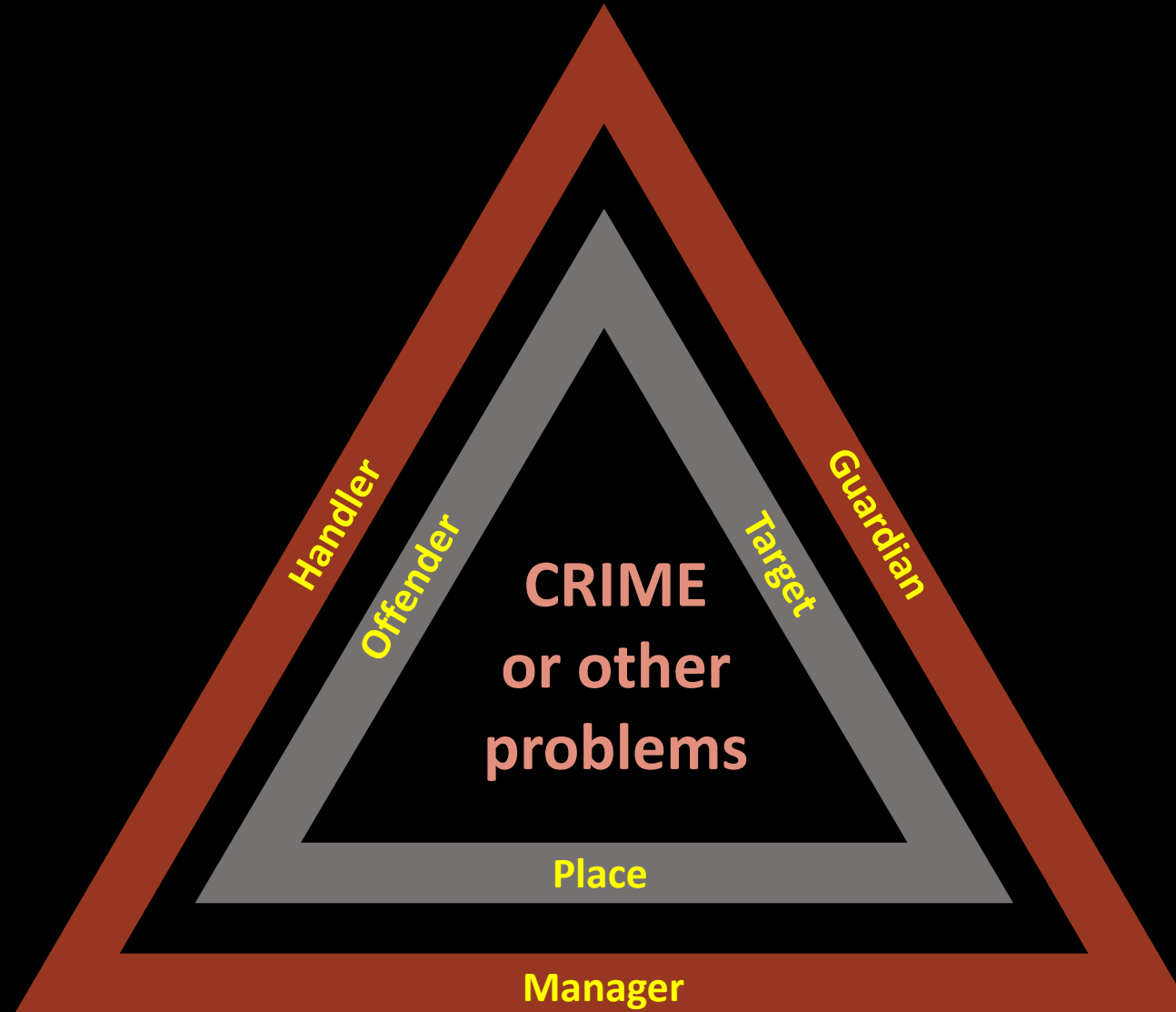
- How you will know if your successful?
- What numbers show success?
- What numbers show effort?
- What is the current distraction?
- How can you get quality numbers?

Successful problem solving requires a compass to assure you are moving toward your goal. Numbers are your best (though not the only) method. Define what to count early and monitor them. Do not confuse the way you are solving the problem (means) with your goals (ends). Stick with the ends and adjust your means. Do not substitute new bright shiny goals.

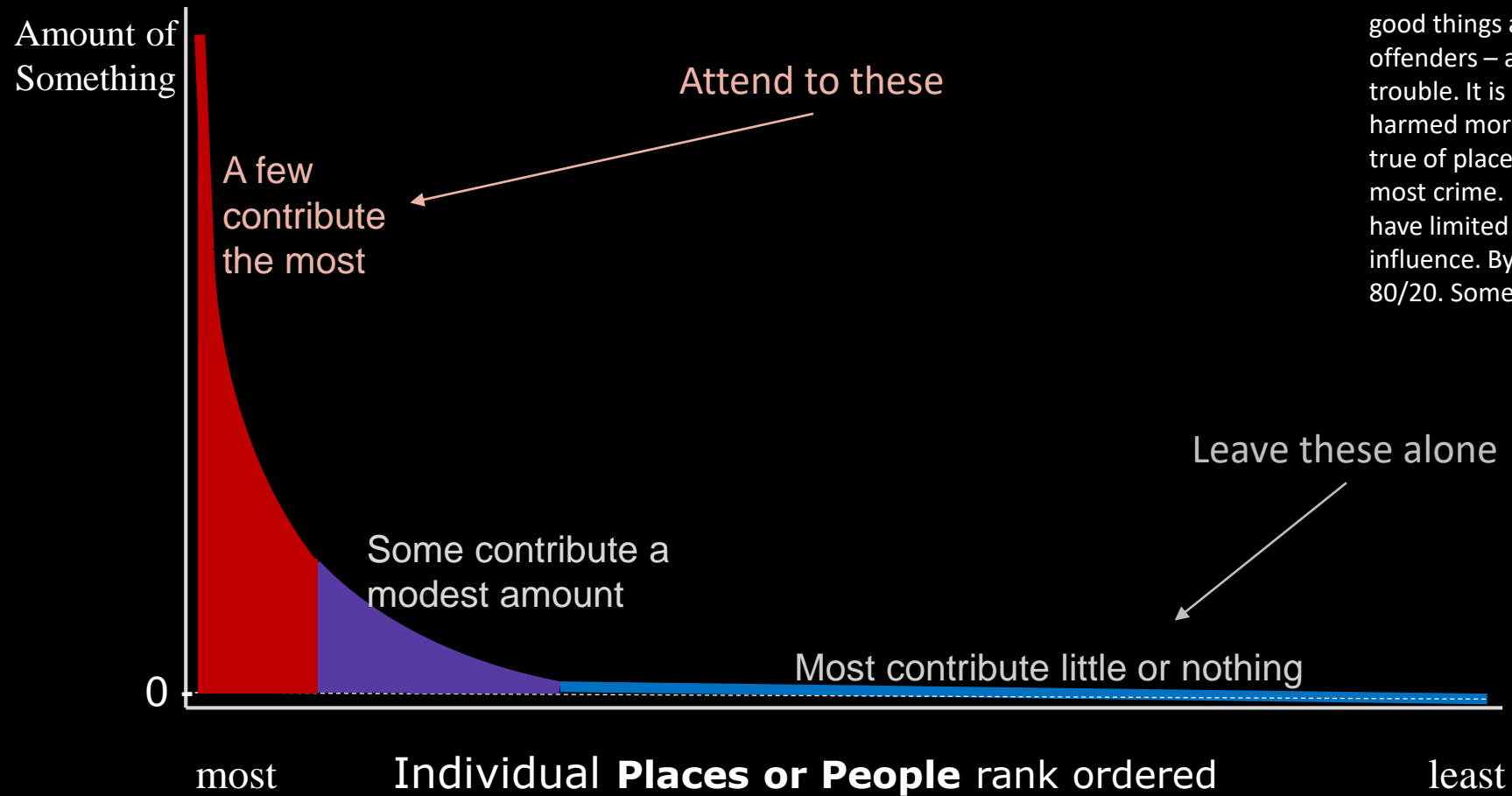


Problem Triangle – who's involved

It takes a variety of people to create a problem; its not just the offenders. Handlers keep possible offenders out of trouble but when absent, contribute to the problem. Guardians protect possible targets and victims, but when weak they are of little help. Managers operate places, but when they do a bad job the place contributes to the problem. Investigate all six elements to see which you need to alter.



80/20 Rule – a few are responsible for most



When looking at all things throughout the world, it is always the case that a few contribute the most. This is true of good things and bad things. It is true of offenders – a few create the most trouble. It is true of victims – a few are harmed more frequently than most. It is true of places – a few places facilitate most crime. Attend to the few if you have limited time, resources, or influence. By the way, its not always 80/20. Sometimes its 90/5 or 60/10.

Focus small to get big results

NO to neighborhoods

YES to addresses and street segments

NO to types of people

YES to specific individuals

NO to generic programs

YES to tailored solutions

NO to gut & political solutions

YES to scientific evidence

Problem solving fails when it is imprecise. Four threats to success are focusing on wide areas such as neighborhoods, on general types of people, applying generic programs touted by pundits and talk-show experts, and ignoring scientific evidence about what works. Rather than neighborhoods, focus on the specific addresses and street segments. Rather than general descriptions (youth, poor, etc.) focus on specific people and organizations. Rather than follow some generic strategy, build a strategy that fits the specifics of your problem. Rather than gut instinct, choose where scientific evidence points.